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Economic research for the integration of disabled people

The University of St.Gallen is launching disability research from the perspectives of management and economics

The social and economic integration of people with disabilities is an issue to which economic research has by no means been accorded the significance that it merits on the strength of its social relevance. In order to close this gap, the University of St.Gallen intends to establish itself in the field of disability research; it will be able to do so thanks to a generous donation. "We are pleased and proud to be able to make a practical contribution towards the improvement of the situation of people who have often suffered great misfortunes," said Ernst Mohr, President of the University of St.Gallen, at a media conference on 6 September 2007.

Basic and practical research at the University of St.Gallen is meant to make an important contribution towards the economic and social integration of people with disabilities. This has been made possible thanks to a personal donation by Mr Joachim Schoss, spiritus rector and chairman of the foundation MyHandicap.com. This cooperation will pursue the following objectives:

- Disability research at the HSG will position itself at an international level through relevant research results and their transfer in both teaching and practice.
- National and international networks will be set up with researchers, universities, institutions and enterprises in the field of disability research.
- Disability research from the perspectives of management and economics will be established as a focal point at the HSG; at the same time, the opportunities for cooperation with the foundation MyHandicap.com will be utilized.
- A contribution will be made to the further development of disability research both at home and abroad.

Disability research at the University of St.Gallen will provide specific answers to questions such as the following: How should social insurance systems be structured to ensure that they will really be conducive to the reintegration of disabled people while at the same time remaining fundable? What possible incentives are there to encourage employers to employ more disabled people of their own free will? What factors are apt to contribute towards an increase in the performance, but also in the satisfaction of disabled employees? How can corporate culture, the make-up of teams, and working hours be planned to satisfy disabled people's requirements?

Disability research at the HSG will be set up through the funding of a tenure-track professorship each in the Department of Management and in the Department of Economics on the basis of a contract of 14 years' duration. The appointment of tenure-track professors will be spread out over time. The first tenure-track professorship is planned for 1 February 2008.

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